



WASHINGTON BUREAU
 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
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 (202) 638-2269 FAX (202) 638-5936

November 20, 2003

Members
 United States House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20510

**RE: NAACP OPPOSES REGRESSIVE MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION
 DRUG LEGISLATION**

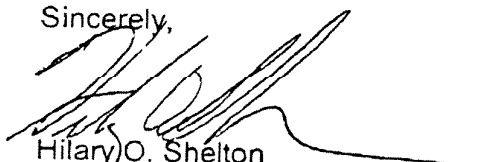
Dear Representative;

On behalf of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots civil rights organization, I am writing to express our opposition to the proposed final version of the Medicare Prescription Drug legislation now pending before you. Our nation's seniors and people with disabilities -- in many cases, the most vulnerable among us -- need genuine reform. As written, the current bill does not offer a solution to our nations Medicare prescription drug problems, and in many cases will result in seniors and disabled Americans paying more for their prescription drugs, or not being able to purchase them at all.

The bill before you will result in as many as 3 million seniors losing their retiree prescription drug coverage; up to 6.4 million of the poorest Medicare beneficiaries will get less drug coverage than they have now; and millions of seniors could see their Medicare premiums rise if they refuse to join an HMO. Because many racial and ethnic minority Americans are often among the poorest Medicare beneficiaries, and a disparate number of them depend on low Medicare premiums to survive, this counterproductive legislation will disproportionately affect our communities throughout the nation.

The NAACP urges Congress to go back to the negotiating table and to come out with a proposal that genuinely makes life-saving drugs affordable and available to seniors, especially low-income and fixed-income seniors. As it is written now, however, the current bill does not protect Americans and should be opposed. Thank you in advance for your help in addressing this crucial concern; if you have any comments or questions about the NAACP position, I hope you will not hesitate to contact me at (202) 638-2269.

Sincerely,


 Hilary O. Shelton
 Director